United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/37

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68615 (E) 190107

Statement

As part of the Alliance of Youth CEOs, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Organisation of the Scout Movement in consultative status with ECOSOC view the education of girls and young women as a fundamental human right.

• We believe education is a basic human right and fundamental to the fight for human dignity and freedom. For 125 million children and 880 million adults, that right is violated everyday.

• 'The Convention on the Rights of the Child', ratified by 192 countries, obliges governments to "make primary education compulsory and available free to all." Yet, of the 680 million children of primary school age, 115 million are not in school – almost two thirds of these being girls (57%).

• Economic hardship can mean many parents view survival as the main priority and often co-opt their children, especially girls, as additional labour resources or keep them at home to help with household chores and care. In the South, some 200 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 go to work instead of going to school.

• Cultural and patriarchal family structures tend to prioritise the needs of boys over girls. Other obstacles to girls' education include a shortage of school space, lack of female teachers, long distances to travel, shortage of text books and school supplies, unaffordable fees and violence.

• The earning potential of women is often lower than men as fewer women study subjects that lead to economic success. Education equips girls and women with the ability to acquire and process information and increased earning power. Every year of schooling lost represents a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in girls' future incomes.

• In 2005 the world missed the first Millennium Development Goal: to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005. Despite some improvement in girls' enrolment over the past decade, the rate at which the gender gap is closing will need to be accelerated if the targets are to be met by 2015.

• Girls' education ranks among the most powerful tools for reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, regards implementing education programmes to combat the HIV/AIDS as a matter of urgency. According to the WHO, lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, lack of education and life skills puts young people at great risk. Formal, academic education continues to be seen as the only essential part of education. Thus, non-formal education which is well equipped to provide girls with the life skills and decision-making capacity to fight discrimination where they can, is underestimated and its benefits are not fully realized.

We call on the international community to

• **Support** free, quality basic education by 2015 and reverse the unacceptably slow progress on girls' education

• **Support** organizations involved in promoting the formal and non-formal education of girls and young women

• **Increase** political commitment to give women's and girls' education a higher priority

• **Introduce** poverty-reduction strategies to ensure that the right to education is the right of every child

• **Eliminate** gender discrimination and promote educational programmes that challenge traditional attitudes of men and boys toward women and girls

• **Provide** universal access to basic social and education services

• **Recognize** that non-formal education is an essential part of the educational process

• **Recognize** the contribution that can be made by non-formal education organizations; specifically by seeking dialogue with non-formal education organizations; supporting and utilizing the skills and experience of such organizations; and strengthening the partnership between formal and nonformal education to create policies that meet the needs of girls.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/38

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd and UNANIMA International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68651 (E) 170107

Statement

We, NGOs working towards the realization of gender equality for women and girls and the elimination of all forms of male violence against the girl child, affirm the need to protect and ensure the human rights and equality of girls. To attain this goal, we must eradicate sexual violence and exploitation of girls.

One of the most severe, devastating, and escalating practices of gender-based violence is the commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls of all ages, including prostitution, sex trafficking, the Internet bride industry, pornography, and sex tourism.

The impact of commercial sexual exploitation on the girl child

Two million girls, aged 5 to 15, are initiated into the commercial sex industry each year.[1] Trafficking, prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation are inextricably linked: the demand for prostituted girls and women is the engine that drives the worldwide crisis of sex trafficking. The demand is fuelled by such factors as gender inequality and female poverty; the presence of the military in many parts of the world; racial myths and stereotypes; national and international economic policies favouring globalization; and countries in financial and political crisis. Under these conditions, the girl child is increasingly vulnerable to the growing reach of the global sex industry. Traffickers and pimps exploit girls seeking to improve their lives through employment, migration or other opportunities. They treat them as commodities to be bought and sold over and over, and to be repeatedly raped by the countless buyers they are required to "service" in prostitution.

The negative impact of sex trafficking on the health and human rights of girls around the world is enormous. Sexual violence is one of the leading factors of the spread of HIV/AIDS among girls. UNAIDS, UNFPA, and UNIFEM have identified gender inequality as the core cause of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, citing their inability to exercise control over their bodies and their lives. Demand for prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of girls increases with the buyers' belief that younger girls are less likely to be infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Victims of prostitution often suffer severe health consequences including physical injuries from beatings, rapes, and unwanted sex; psychological trauma; HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; and alcohol and drug abuse induced by pimps or by victims' attempts to self-medicate. Women and girls suffering from these severe and often long-term health problems are hindered in attaining and advancing their human rights.

Further, girls' education is disrupted when they are trafficked into prostitution or other sexually exploitative situations such as early marriages. Without access to school, girls fail to develop their potential, often perpetuating their sexual exploitation into adulthood. Without the knowledge and training available to other youth, prostituted girls grow up to be women with few opportunities to improve their lives. Moreover, while most governments recognize girls as victims of the sex trade, they often fail to see the harms they face when they continue to be exploited after they reach adulthood.

Rather than recognizing women's human rights, some governments have adopted development policies effectively normalizing and, in some places, even legalizing the sexual violence and exploitation of prostitution and pornography.

Legal legitimation of prostitution gives men moral and social permission to purchase, use and abuse women and girls, which in turn increases the demand that fuels sex trafficking. As the demand for prostituted women and girls escalates, so does the risk of sexual exploitation for girls.

Governments' obligations to eliminate sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, particularly of the girl child

International law requires governments to protect the girl child from commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), for instance, which has been ratified by 192 countries, requires that States parties protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, and take all measures possible to ensure that they are not abducted, sold or trafficked (articles 34 and 35). Further, the Convention's Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, to which over 100 governments are parties, provides more extensive requirements to end commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Optional Protocol recognizes that penalizing the demand for commercial sexual exploitation is important, since it requires punishment not only for those offering or delivering children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, but also for anyone accepting a child for such purposes (article 3). Additionally, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime recognizes that all children under eighteen who are sexually exploited are trafficking victims (article 3).[ii]

Despite these and other mandates under international law to protect victims of sex trafficking and prostitution, many States parties frequently abdicate their obligations. For instance, the prostituted and trafficked girl child is routinely arrested for prostitution or other related offences and treated as a criminal, while her trafficker, pimp and buyers remain free and unpunished.

Recommendations

In order to ensure the human rights of the girl child, governments and civil society must take action to eradicate sexual violence and exploitation of girls. We urge government policy and action in the following areas:

- Implementation of preventative measures such as public education campaigns which describe the risks of trafficking, prostitution, and related forms of sexual exploitation to potential victims, and which challenge the attitudes and practices of potential perpetrators of sexual exploitation and confront the social tolerance and acceptance of prostitution and the sex industry;
- Development of educational curricula, including in the lower grades, that raise awareness about the harm of gender stereotypes and sexual objectification of women and girls;
- Elimination by governments of structural and patriarchal factors that push women and girls into trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation such as poverty, systematic violence against women and girls, gender discrimination, harmful traditional practices, and other forms of discrimination such as racism;
- Increased support and holistic services for survivors of both international and domestic sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation;

- Promotion and implementation of effective laws against trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism and related forms of sexual exploitation, including provisions criminalizing the demand for trafficking and prostitution and prosecuting buyers for extraterritorial offences such as sex tourism abroad;
- Development of training programs for government bodies such as law enforcement to hold perpetrators, including traffickers, pimps and buyers, accountable rather than criminalizing victims;
- Strong and effective prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence, including buyers and sellers of women and girls in prostitution and related practices of sexual exploitation. In all cases involving the girl child, buyers must be recognized and penalized as child abusers and rapists under applicable local laws;
- Rejection of government policies promoting prostitution, whether through legalization, decriminalization or tolerance of the sex industry;
- Rejection of the dangerous use of the misguided term "sex worker", which minimizes the abuses and exploitation of prostitution as if it were an ordinary job, particularly when referring to sexually exploited children and youth;[iii]
- Effective monitoring and prosecution of the sellers and buyers of sexual exploitation of the girl child via the Internet and other media;
- Ratification and implementation of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The effects of commercial sexual exploitation on women's and girls' education, health and work are severe and long-lasting. Sexual exploitation of girls is a violation of their fundamental human rights and all governments must take action to eradicate these destructive practices. Governments and civil society must recognize that the commodification and sexualization of the girl child has a profoundly negative impact on human dignity and the achievement of human rights and equality.

Notes

Statement supported and endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Defence for Children International, Dominican Leadership Council, Equality Now, Grail, Guild of Service, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Presentation Association of Sisters of the Presentation, Loretto Community, Miramed Institute, Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association, Peace Worldwide, Perhaps Kids Meeting Kids Can Make A Difference, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Women's Federation for World Peace International, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Movement of Mothers and Worldwide Organization for Women.

[i] UNFPA, Chapter 3: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in State of World Population 2000 at http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/english/ch03.html.

[ii] With respect to child victims under the UN Trafficking Protocol, "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve [force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception and other enumerated means]." Article 3.

[iii] The Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery recently deplored the use of the term "child sex worker". United Nations Economic and Social Council, SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY: Report of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery on its twenty-ninth session (July 20, 2004) E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/36.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/39

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, Fédération européene des femmes actives au foyer, Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Femmes Afrique solidarité, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, International Association of Gerontology, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's International Zionist Organization, Women's World Summit Foundation, World Movement of Mothers, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations and Worldwide Organization for Women, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68657 (E) 190107

Statement

We, the above named Non Governmental Organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, through our report on girls' infanticide and female feticide that will be presented and distributed during the CSW in its 51st session and this statement, reaffirm and call attention to the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of the girl child. Despite the legal human rights framework and namely the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), we are deeply concerned with the phenomena of girl infanticide and female feticide, which deny the girl-child the most basic human right, the right to be born. Not only has the status of the girl-child not improved but in many regions of the world, it has worsened and its future is threatened.

Girl infanticide, killing a baby girl at or very soon after birth, is a traditional practice in some parts of Asia.

Female feticide is a modern version of infanticide which consists of killing a female fetus via sex-selective abortions. Female feticide, which has rapidly increased over the last decade, is even more perverse than girl infanticide in that modern technology has made it easier, more silent and an industry has developed to promote it.

Both these practices are based on the traditional belief that a girl is less valuable than a boy, and therefore is not worth living. Mainly due to cultural, religious or social factors and practices, such as dowry requirements and inheritance laws, having a girl-child is still considered a burden or a failure in many countries. There is no rational explanation for this phenomenon, given the knowledge that sex-selective abortions are even more common in wealthier and educated families.

The magnitude of this human rights violation is building to a worrisome demographic imbalance with economical and social consequences worldwide:

- Killing of girls in the most populated countries means fewer wives and mothers and in turn, fewer girls and mothers for future generations resulting into a greater imbalance in the number of men and women in the world. Over 100 million women are missing[i], which will result in a 12 to 15 per cent excess of young men in the next twenty years and therefore a bride shortage. For example, between 2015 and 2030, 25 million Chinese men will have no hope of finding a wife[ii].

- Trafficking of girls and women across borders, states and within communities is developing at an alarmingly high speed. This only enhances the traditional power structure detrimental to women: becoming seen as a commodity and therefore holding less value. The "paros" phenomenon or the import of "women from the outside" sadly illustrates this situation as girls are easily bought- and the younger the girl, the higher the price.

- Forced marriages are increasing dramatically, in some cases forcing young women into marrying and belonging to several men at the same time.

The phenomena of girl infanticide and female feticide are alarming and this is the reason why we are calling upon the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in its 51st session focusing on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child to:

- reaffirm the equal dignity of men and women, and especially the right to be born

We also call upon the UN CSW to request political commitment from governments to:

- strengthen and implement laws against girls' infanticide

- amend laws that create and support the conditions where women are seen as a burden, such as inheritance laws and dowry requirements

- create an environment favorable to girls, for example by giving allowances to families who welcome girls

- provide education on gender equality

- support good local initiatives from NGOs which support families with girl children from pregnancy onwards

Madame Chair, nothing can justify the mass-killing, torture, ill-treatment or sale of girls. We expect that at this UN CSW, a recommendation will be adopted to address this deplorable situation.

i Isabelle Attané, "L'Asie manque de femmes", http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2006/07/ATTANE/13601 JUILLET 2006 - Pages 2, 16 et 17.

ii Isabelle Attané, Demographie et Sinologue, chargee de recherces a l'Institut national d'etudes demographiques (INED), Paris, Une Chine sans femmes? Perrin, Paris, 2005.

Note:

Statement also endorsed by Institute for Family Policy, NGO Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva and Working Group on the Girl Child

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/40

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Christian Children's Fund, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68621 (E) 190107

Statement

Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups

The theme of this year's CSW, "Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child," presents a timely opportunity for addressing the issues and concerns of girls who are associated with armed forces and groups ("girl soldiers"). We recognize that there is greater international awareness of children recruited and used by armed forces and groups. We commend efforts by the Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, and civil society in their human rights advocacy for child soldiers. Furthermore, we have been encouraged by the development of international standards such as the Optional Protocol on Children and Armed Conflict, the ICC, Security Resolution 1612, ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst forms of Child Labour, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Yet, we are concerned that relatively little attention has focused specifically on the needs and concerns of girl soldiers. All too often their presence is overlooked in conflict and post-conflict situations. The girl soldier is the most vulnerable in armed conflict not only because of her age but also due to the higher risk of experiencing gender discrimination, gender-based violence, and social stigmatization during and after conflict.

The girl soldier remains hidden partly due to the fact that her role as a soldier is varied and unrecognized. The roles may include any of the following experiences: armed fighting, combat trainers, mine sweepers, spying and informant, forced marriage, early motherhood, sex slavery, nursing, looters, messengers, and food gatherers/cooks. Girls are systematically recruited and used for particular purposes – slipping undetected through security points, carrying heavy loads silently, or sex slavery. Girls who fill these various roles often remain invisible to governments, UN entities, and humanitarian agencies. Governments, donors, UN agencies, and humanitarian aid organizations should presume that the girl soldier exists in all armed conflicts.

Traditional Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes have inhibited the protection and gender development needs of the girl soldier. Even when access to rehabilitation programmes is available to girls, they avoid them because of their overly public nature. They expose the girl soldier and her offspring to greater stigmatization and community ostracization. In addition, many girl soldiers still refrain from traditional DDR programmes due to age and gender insensitive environments. There have been some steps in improving DDR processes such as DPKO in establishing child protection officers in missions and Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for a greater incorporation of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and DDR. Progress calls for better implementation and monitoring mechanisms of girl soldiers in situations of conflict and in DDR processes. Governments, UN agencies, and humanitarian aid organizations need to ensure DDR processes and programmes address the girl soldier's gender-specific and highly-sensitive experiences of abduction, forced marriage, prostitution, early motherhood, in addition to armed fighting roles.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have outlined important protection and psychosocial guidelines for girls that are being overlooked in the post-conflict rehabilitation agenda.

> States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.
> (CRC, Article 39)

> Develop and disseminate research on the physical, psychological, economic and social effects of armed conflicts on women, particularly young women and girls, with a view to developing policies and programmes to address the consequences of conflicts.
> (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, E4.146.c)

Building upon these recommendations means reforming traditional DDR programmes to encompass the more holistic approach of Prevention, Release, and Integration (PRI). PRI programmes that are gender-specific are necessary for the prevention of continual harm by men and boys on the girl soldier and their children, as well as attention to gender-specific issues. We propose the following recommendations as necessary steps to protecting girl soldiers and ending their invisibility and lack of access to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. DDR programmes and post-conflict humanitarian aid should be reassessed to include the following:

Prevention:

- Mandatory vulnerability analysis processes need to be implemented.
- Research needs to be built upon effective practice.
- Prevention needs to include a holistic prevention policy on all levels, from familial to societal.
- Fund and conduct comparative gender studies to document community-based programme responses and outcomes for reintegrating girl soldiers and their children as well as incorporating gender, reproductive health, market analysis, vocational and business skills, and population issues in PRI.
- Train PRI implementers and peace-builders (including protection monitoring).
- End impunity for recruiters of child soldiers.
- Provide positive life options for girls and youth such as employment, education.

Release:

- Do not assume that girl soldiers are nonexistent even if armed groups deny their participation.
- Provide a safe environment for girls to acknowledge their roles as soldiers.
- Include girls in the process of determining their own release from armed forces and groups.

Integration:

- Offer community-based reintegration programmes that are gender sensitive. Such programmes should comprise of conflict resolution, dialogue, and mediation among families and communities.

Social reintegration or restorative justice needs to be included to prevent social stigmatization. Girls and community leaders should be included in offering solutions for reintegration and restorative justice.

- Integration programs should recognize that girls are not a uniform category – some may have been commanders while other have been porters. Integration programs should recognize the skills acquired inside the armed groups and offer girls various choices or options regarding their reintegration activities and pathways.
- Build upon the resilient nature of girl soldiers by including their voices and input in rehabilitation processes.
- Conduct sensitization training of governments, peace-builders, and communities in post-conflict rehabilitation. Include in these trainings the key persons identified as religious leaders, traditional practitioners, health workers etc.
- Girl soldiers' and their children's inability to reintegrate into society is compounded by lack of access to education and to health care, by community stigmatization and familial or "husband" abandonment, which can be additionally compounded by single parenting. Integration should include the holistic needs of girl soldiers such as medical care that includes traditional healing, psychosocial care, non-threatening spiritual rituals, and child agency building. Jobs, training, literacy, and education should not be forgotten in integration. These measures can prevent further inscription into armed groups. Moving girl soldiers beyond poverty is crucial for her and her children's successful integration into society.
- Form NGO partnerships and community groups for establishing effective Integration programmes.
- Access to healthcare is critical because of girls' heightened exposure to gender-based violence. Girl soldiers are greater risk of fistulas, STIs, and HIV/AIDs. Their physical and psychological health is also of serious concern due to rape and early motherhood.
- Children born to girl soldiers in captivity and/or children born out of rape also need the same access to integration aid. Girl soldiers' children are also victims of social stigmatization.
- Not all girl soldiers have been abducted, some chose to join for a variety of reasons: to avoid poverty, to ameliorate their livelihood, to develop skills, to escape other forms of violence, or to participate in a unified entity. In order for effective reintegration programmes, they need to address the root causes for girls joining armed groups.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/41

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by the American Psychological Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

06-68627 (E) 180107

Statement

We, the nongovernmental organizations listed below, commend the Commission of the Status of Women for focusing on "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child." This focus continues the emphasis placed on the Girl Child in the Beijing Platform for Action in which countries agreed to end discrimination against girls, including violence.

Rather than restricting concerns solely to the Girl Child, we encourage the Commission to consider gender-based violence on a continuum, ranging from violence against the Girl Child, to violence against Women, and finally to violence against Older Women. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated that violence against women begins in the "cradle and continues into old age."

It is our contention that violence against the Girl Child has undesirable psychological effects, limits her ability for fulfillment as she becomes a woman, and also adversely affects her as she becomes an older woman. Therefore, gender-based violence throughout the life cycle must be eliminated so that the Girl Child may be empowered to become a fully functioning woman in society, and can have a full and rich life as she becomes an Older Woman. In this manner, the promises of the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, will be fulfilled. We also would encourage all Member States to implement the recommendations of the Secretary General's Study on Violence against Women, which was released 9 October 2006.

We further recommend that

1. All forms of violence against the Girl Child be eliminated, including but not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence, child abuse, early and forced marriage and sex trafficking.

2. As the Girl Child becomes a woman, nations should prohibit and punish perpetrators of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment through the development and enforcement of laws. Impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes must not be allowed to continue.

3. Gender-based violence and discrimination must be eliminated when older women become targets.

4. Economic, social and cultural attitudes and norms should be changed so that women at all stages of the life cycle are integrated positively as equal partners in society.

Note:

Statement endorsed and supported by Armenian International Women's Association, Congregations of St. Joseph, Dominican Leadership Conference, Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, Hadassah — Women's Zionist Organization of America, Hunger Project, International Council of Psychologists, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, International Women's Tribune Centre,

Pacific Rim Institute for Development and Education, Soroptimist International, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Women's Sports Foundation, Women's Welfare Centre, World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, World Union for Progressive Judaism and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and by WomenSport International and the United States Committee for UNICEF, non-governmental organizations.

United Nations E/CN.6/2007/NGO/42

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 January 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session
26 February-9 March 2007
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

07-22187 (E) 260107

Statement

Childhood is the most significant and sensitive period of human life. It forms both mental and physical characteristics of each individual and shapes their attitudes and worldviews. Childhood lays the foundation of our future. Child girl, in particular, needs a more urgent attention, because they have been the victim of discrimination and violence for a longer period of human history.

Fortunately, in recent decades world community has paid greater attention to the rights and needs of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a solid ground to promote the rights of child and protect them from violence and discrimination as indispensable obligations of all states parties. With regard to the girl child, the Beijing Platform for Action put special emphasis on concrete measures to increase public awareness and to eliminate discrimination in education, health and nutrition as well as physical training. In addition, it strives to develop new opportunities for advancement of the girl-child. The decision of the Commission on the Status of Women to choose "the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girl child" as its priority theme for its fifty-first session reflects the urgency and necessity of the matter.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has incorporated the Strategic Objectives of Beijing Platform for Action in its Fourth National Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan to promote and protect the rights of girl child. To this end it has put emphasis on deprived regions and rural areas to make sure that all girls have equal opportunity for free education as well as public health services. Equal access to nutrition, mental and emotional and reproductive health is of outmost importance particularly for vulnerable girls. Government and civil society organizations have designed programmes for a better understanding of family planning, improving reproductive and sexual health, and reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Special attention has been paid for protecting girls at home and society against violence in all its forms, discrimination, negligence, forced labor, sexual abuse and trafficking. Despite such measures there are inadequacies in all fields and a coordinated action plan is necessary to be implemented by government and NGOs in all levels of society, particularly in deprived areas and for poor and vulnerable families.

RIWL as a non-profit non-governmental organization advocates women's equal access to health, education and employment. It also strives to empower women against gender-based violence, social discrimination and socio-psychological harm. It has taken MDG as its priority and has particularly focused on goals 3, 4, 5 & 6.

It has also adopted life skills to address a variety of issues threatening the heath and well being of children and youth. Life skills may include: a-interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy and refusal; b- cognitive skills such as decision making and critical thinking; c- emotional coping such as stress management. In this context, for the last three years, this institute has held thousands of workshops for children, adolescent, youth and even parents. In all programs special attention has been paid to girls and women.

Finally, it is imperative to develop a global mechanism or fund to promote girls' mental and physical heath as well as to protect them from discrimination and violence. To this end, it is advisable to include life skills for girls in all level of school programs.